

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action dated April 19, 2006 is respectfully requested. By this amendment, claims 5, 6, and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 1-4, and 7-14, have been amended, and new claims 16-17 have been submitted. Currently, claims 1-4, 7-14, and 16-17 are pending in this application.

Submission of references

The Examiner indicated that the references submitted in connection with the Information Disclosure Statement filed February 4, 2004, had not been received and, hence, not considered. Applicants submit herewith the four references that were submitted in connection with that IDS so that the Examiner may consider these references. Applicants also submit herewith a duplicate PTO-1449 so that the Examiner may indicate that the references have been considered.

No fee is believed due in connection with submission of these references, since it appears that the references were lost by the Patent Office. As proof of this, applicants submit herewith a stamped post card indicating that the references were previously submitted to and received by the Patent Office when the IDS was filed. The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider these references in connection with issuing a subsequent action/notice of allowance in this application.

Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings because the drawing correction submitted on August 20, 2004, was not labeled "Replacement Sheet". Applicants submit a new Drawing Correction Authorization Request concurrently herewith in which the drawings have been correctly labeled. The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve the drawing corrections.

First Rejection under 35 USC 101 (abstract idea)

Claims 1-4 and 12-15 were rejected under 35 USC 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants have amended the claims to overcome this rejection and respectfully request that it be withdrawn.

Second rejection under 35 USC 101 (lack of utility)

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The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 12-15 under 35 USC 101 as not supported by either a credible asserted utility or a well established utility. Applicants have amended the claims to overcome this rejection and respectfully request that it be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 USC 112, first paragraph.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 12-15 under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, because, according to the Examiner, the claimed invention is not supported by either a credible asserted utility or a well established utility. Applicants have amended the claims to overcome this rejection and respectfully request that it be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 14-15 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as incomplete for omitting essential steps, citing MPEP 2172.01. Applicants have amended the claims to overcome this rejection and respectfully request that it be withdrawn.

Objection to claims 1-3

The Examiner objected to claims 1-3 because of several informalities. Applicants have amended the claims to overcome this objection and respectfully request that it be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 USC 102

Claims 1-5 and 12-15 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as anticipated by Ahanessians, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,401,340). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the amendment to the claims. Specifically, the Examiner indicated in paragraph 27 of the office action that claims 6-11 were deemed to be allowable over the art of record. Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the features formerly set forth in dependent claims 5 and 6 to cause claim 11 to incorporate the features found to be allowable by the Examiner. Similar amendments have been made with respect to claim 14. Accordingly, in view of the amendments to the claims, applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 USC 102 be withdrawn.

Applicants submit herewith several new claims. These claims are supported by the application as originally filed for example as shown in Fig. 3B. Consideration of these new claims is respectfully requested.

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Conclusion

In view of foregoing claim amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance and an action to this effect is respectfully requested. If there are any questions or concerns regarding the amendments or these remarks, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

If any fees are due in connection with this filing, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of the fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 502246 (Ref: NN-16550).

Respectfully Submitted


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